

EXHIBIT I



NFL PLAYER BENEFITS

DISABILITY PLAN

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Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Phone 800.638.3186
Fax 410.783.0041

Via Federal Express

November 15, 2021

Mr. Daniel Loper
1405 Boardwalk Place
Gallatin, TN 37066

Re: NFL Player Disability & Neurocognitive Benefit Plan—Final Decision on Review

Dear Mr. Loper:

On November 10, 2021, the Disability Board of the NFL Player Disability & Neurocognitive Benefit Plan ("Plan") considered your appeal from the earlier denial of your application for line-of-duty disability ("LOD") benefits. We regret to inform you that the Disability Board denied your appeal. This letter describes the Disability Board's decision; it identifies the Plan provisions on which the decision was based; and it explains your legal rights.

Discussion

The Plan provides LOD benefits to Players who, in addition to other requirements, have incurred a "substantial disablement" "arising out of League football activities." The Plan defines these terms and requires that at least one Plan neutral physician must find that the Player meets this standard in order to be eligible for LOD benefits (see enclosed Plan Section 5.1(b)).

On March 3, 2020, the Plan received your completed application for LOD benefits, which was based on orthopedic impairments and was accompanied by a summary of impairments and 187 pages of medical records.

As you know, on January 22, 2021, the Disability Initial Claims Committee ("Committee") denied your application after reviewing your file and concluding that you are ineligible for LOD benefits. In making its determination, the Committee relied on the findings of Plan neutral orthopedist Dr. David Apple, who is a specialist in the medical field of your claimed impairments. After reviewing your records and evaluating you, Dr. Apple assigned you 3 points under the Plan's Point System for Orthopedic Impairments (less than the 10 points required for a "substantial disablement" within the meaning of Section 5.5(a)(4)(B) of the Plan) in the case of applications received before April 1, 2020. Based on this conclusion, the Committee denied your application under Plan Section 5.1(b) because no Plan neutral physician had found that you have a "substantial disablement" arising out of League football activities.

By letter received May 24, 2021, your representative, Sam Katz, appealed the Committee's initial decision to the Disability Board and submitted additional medical records.

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On appeal, you were examined by another Plan neutral orthopedist, Dr. Marcus Cook, pursuant to Plan Section 5.4(b) and the Plan's claims procedures. Like Dr. Apple, who examined you at the initial level, Dr. Cook is an orthopedic specialist who has experience evaluating impairments under the Plan's Point System. After examining you and reviewing your medical records, Dr. Cook rated your orthopedic impairments at 9 points (again below the 10 points required for LOD benefits under the terms of the Plan).

By letter dated July 30, 2021, the NFL Player Benefits Office provided you and Mr. Katz with a copy of Dr. Cook's report and advised that you had the right to respond before the Disability Board issued a final decision on your appeal. By letter received October 25, 2021, Mr. Katz criticized the reports of Drs. Apple and Cook, requested an evaluation by a Medical Advisory Physician ("MAP") or an award of additional points for your left wrist impairments, and submitted a video of game footage in support of your appeal.

The Disability Board reviewed the current record and unanimously determined that you are ineligible for LOD benefits under the 10-point standard. Plan Section 5.1(b) states that, for a Player to be eligible for LOD benefits, at least one Plan neutral physician must conclude that the Player incurred a "substantial disablement" arising out of League football activities (the Plan's standard for LOD benefits). If no Plan neutral physician renders this conclusion, then "the Player will not be eligible for and will not receive [LOD] benefits, regardless of any other fact(s), statement(s), or determination(s), by any other person or entity, contained in the administrative record." In your case, the Disability Board found that you did not meet this threshold requirement because, based on your Point System ratings, neither one of the Plan neutral orthopedists reported that you have a "substantial disablement" arising out of League football activities. The Disability Board did not find a basis for a MAP evaluation and, therefore, did not refer you for such an evaluation.

The Disability Board took into account the following factors. First, the neutral physicians who examined you are specialists in the medical field encompassing your claimed impairments, and they have experience evaluating Players and other professional athletes. Second, the Plan's neutral physicians reviewed all of the records you provided, conducted thorough physical examinations of you, and provided complete and detailed reports of your condition. Even though the records you provided did not indicate that you meet the Plan's standard for a substantial disablement, they helped the Plan's neutral physicians award the points you received. Finally, the Disability Board found that the conclusions of the Plan's neutral physicians were consistent, in that they independently concluded that you do not have a "substantial disablement" despite your impairments. The Plan's physicians are absolutely neutral in this process because they are jointly selected by the NFL Players Association and the NFL Management Council; they are compensated in flat-fee arrangements, irrespective of the outcome of any particular evaluation; and they are contractually obligated to conduct thorough examinations, free of bias for or against Players. The Disability Board has no doubt that the Plan's neutral physicians fully understand the obligation to conduct fair and impartial Player evaluations, and that they have done so in your case.

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For these reasons, the Disability Board denied your appeal.

Legal Rights

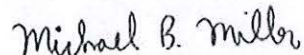
You should regard this letter as a final decision on review within the meaning of Section 503 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended, and the regulations issued thereunder by the Department of Labor. To obtain further review of this decision, you have the right to bring an action under Section 502(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended. Under Plan Section 13.4(a) you must file such an action within 42 months from the date of the Board's decision. Your deadline for bringing such an action therefore is May 10, 2025.

This letter identifies the Plan provisions that the Disability Board relied upon in making its determination. Please note that the Plan provisions discussed in this letter are set forth in the "Relevant Plan Provisions" attachment. These are excerpts, however. You should consult the Plan Document for a full recitation of the relevant Plan terms. The Disability Board did not rely on any other internal rules, guidelines, protocols, standards, or other similar criteria beyond the Plan provisions discussed herein.

You are entitled to receive, upon request and free of charge, reasonable access to, and copies of, all documents, records, and other information relevant to your claim for benefits, including the governing Plan Document.

You may call the NFL Player Benefits Office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Miller
Plan Director
On behalf of the Disability Board

Enclosure
cc: Sam Katz, Esquire

<p>To receive assistance in these languages, please call:</p> <p>SPANISH (Español): Para obtener asistencia en Español, llame al 855-938-0527 (ext. 1)</p> <p>CHINESE (中文): 如果需要中文的帮助, 请拨打这个号码 855-938-0527 (ext. 2)</p> <p>TAGALOG (Tagalog): Kung kailangan ninyo ang tulong sa Tagalog tumawag sa 855-938-0527 (ext. 3)</p> <p>NAVAJO (Dine): Dinek'ehgo shika at'ohwol ninisingo, kwijigo holne' 800-638-3186 (ext. 416)</p>
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Relevant Plan Provisions

5.1 Eligibility. Effective January 1, 2015, a Player will receive monthly line-of-duty disability benefits from this Plan in the amount described in Section 5.2 if and only if all of the conditions in (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) below are met:

(a) The Player is not an Active Player.

(b) At least one Plan neutral physician selected pursuant to Section 5.4(b) below must find that the Player incurred a "substantial disablement" (as defined in Section 5.5(a) and (b)) "arising out of League football activities" (as defined in Section 5.5(c)). If no Plan neutral physician renders such a conclusion, then this threshold requirement is not satisfied, and the Player will not be eligible for and will not receive line-of-duty disability benefits, regardless of any other fact(s), statement(s), or determination(s), by any other person or entity, contained in the administrative record.

(c) After reviewing the report(s) of the Plan neutral physician(s) selected pursuant to Section 5.4(b) below, along with all other facts and circumstances in the administrative record, the Disability Initial Claims Committee or the Disability Board, as the case may be, must conclude, in its absolute discretion, that the Player incurred a "substantial disablement" (as defined in Section 5.5(a) and (b)) "arising out of League football activities" (as defined in Section 5.5(c)).

(d) The Player satisfies the other requirements of this Article 5 or Article 6 of the Bert Bell/Pete Rozelle Plan, as appropriate.

(e) The Player is not receiving line-of-duty disability benefits from the Bert Bell/Pete Rozelle Plan pursuant to Article 6 of that plan.

Section 5.5(a)(4)(B) defines "substantial disablement" with respect to orthopedic impairments as follows:

With respect to applications received on or after January 1, 2015, [a "substantial disablement" is one that] is rated at least 10 points, using the Point System set forth in Appendix A, Version 2 to this Plan. Surgeries, injuries, treatments, and medical procedures that occur after a Player's application deadline in Section 5.4(a) will not receive points and will be disregarded by the Committee and Board.

The introduction to **Appendix A, Version 2** provides this overview of the **Point System** referenced in Section 5.5(a)(4)(B):

This Point System for Orthopedic Impairments ("Point System") is used to determine whether a Player has a "substantial disablement" within the meaning of Plan Section 5.5(a)(4)(B). The Point System assigns points to each orthopedic impairment recognized under the Plan. A Player is awarded the indicated number of points for each occurrence of each listed orthopedic impairment, but only where the Player's orthopedic impairment arose out of

League football activities, and the impairment has persisted or is expected to persist for at least 12 months from the date of its occurrence, excluding any reasonably possible recovery period.

A Player is awarded points only if his orthopedic impairment is documented according to the following rules:

1. A Player is awarded points for documented surgeries, injuries, and degenerative joint disease only if they are related to League football activities.
2. A Player is awarded points for a surgical procedure if the record includes an operative report for the qualifying procedure or if NFL Club records document the procedure. Surgical procedures reported through third party evaluations, such as independent medical examinations for workers' compensation, should not be used unless corroborating evidence is available to confirm the procedure and its relationship to League football activities.
3. Points are awarded for symptomatic soft tissue injuries where the injury is documented and there are appropriate, consistent clinical findings that are symptomatic on the day of exam. For example, AC joint injuries must be documented in medical records and be symptomatic on examination, with appropriate physical findings, to award points.
4. If an injury or surgery is not listed in the Point System, no points should be awarded.
5. Medical records, medical history, and the physical examination must correlate before points can be awarded.
6. If a lateral clavicle resection is given points, additional points cannot be awarded if the AC joint is still symptomatic, such as with AC joint inflammation or shoulder instability.
7. Moderate or greater degenerative changes must be seen on x-ray to award points (i.e., MRI findings do not count).
8. Players must have moderate or greater loss of function that significantly impacts activities of daily living, or ADLs, to get points.
9. Cervical and lumbosacral spine injuries must have a documented relationship to League football activities, with appropriate x-ray findings, MRI findings, and/or EMG findings to be rated.
10. In cases where an injury is treated surgically, points are awarded for the surgical treatment/repair only, and not the injury preceding the surgical treatment/repair. For example, a Player may receive points for "S/P Pectoralis Major

Tendon Repair,” and if so he will not receive additional points for the “Pectoralis Major Tendon Tear” that led to the surgery.

11. As indicated in the Point System Impairment Tables, some injuries must be symptomatic on examination to merit an award of points under the Point System.

12. To award points for a subsequent procedure on the same joint/body part, the Player must recover from the first procedure and a new injury must occur to warrant the subsequent procedure. Otherwise, a revise/redo of a failed procedure would be the appropriate impairment rating.

13. Hardware removal is not considered a revise/redo of a failed surgery, and points are not awarded for hardware removal.

14. Multiple impairment ratings may be given related to a procedure on the same date, i.e., partial lateral meniscectomy and microfracture or chondral resurfacing.

15. When an ankle ORIF with soft tissue occurs, there should be no additional points for syndesmosis repair or deltoid ligament repair.

Appendix A, Version 2 then includes comprehensive “Point System Impairment Tables,” which assign Point System values to each orthopedic impairment recognized under the Plan. Your total “points” are the sum of those assigned for your recognized orthopedic impairments.

The Point System for Orthopedic Impairments is online at nflplayerbenefits.com. The NFL Player Benefits Office will furnish a full copy of it upon your request.

Plan Section 5.5(c) states:

“Arising out of League football activities” means a disablement arising out of any League pre-season, regular-season, or post-season game, or any combination thereof, or out of League football activity supervised by an Employer, including all required or directed activities. “Arising out of League football activities” does not include, without limitation, any disablement resulting from other employment, or athletic activity for recreational purposes, nor does it include a disablement that would not qualify for benefits but for an injury (or injuries) or illness that arises out of other than League football activities.

Plan Section 13.4 is entitled “Limitation on Actions.” It states, “[n]o suit or legal action with respect to an adverse determination may be commenced more than 42 months from the date of the final decision on the claim for benefits (including the decision on review).”